THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRJPADYESSO NAIK): (a) to (d) Natural calamities do cause damage of varying magnitude to crops, depending on intensity of the calamity. However, there is no evidence to suggest that most of the crops are damaged every year by such calamities. There is built-in mechanism for providing relief to farmers from the Calamity Relief Fund of each State which, according to recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission, consists of 75% of the annual allocation contributed by the Centre and the balance 25% contributed by the respective States. As regards calamities of severe nature, additional assistance is considered from the National Calamity Contingency Fund. Also, the items and norms of relief assistance provides for payment of input subsidy to small and marginal farmers for damaged crops.

Quality of processed foods

2744. SHRI S ATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken or propose to take any special steps for improving the quality of its processed foods; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES INTHE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRITH. CHAOBA SINGH): (a) and (b)The Agro Food Processing Industries are required to comply with provisions of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, the Fruit Products Order, the Milk and Milk Products Order, the Meat Food Products Order, the Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 1977. To ensure mat the hygiene and food quality of food products is maintained at appropriate standards, the provisions and stipulations of these Orders and Rules are continuously monitored and amended from time to time, as required. Further, Government has already initiated action to harmonize the domestic standards with International standards.

Tardy earthquake rehabilitation work in Gujarat

2745. SHRI A. VUAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been tardy progress in relief/rehabilitation work in the quake-hit areas of Gujarat;

(b) whether there have been complaints of unequal relief measures also and showing of discrimination in rehabilitation the affected persons; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken by the Central Government to check the malfunctioning?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPADYESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) No, Sir. No such reports have been received by the Central Government.

(c) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Government to undertake necessary measures in the wake of natural calamities. The Government of India supplements the efforts of the State Government. However, any specific complaint received is forwarded to the State Government for suitable action.

Fall in prices of agricultural commodities

2746. DR.DASARINARAYANARAO:
SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a)»whether Government have noticed the constant fall in prices of almost all the agriculture crops in the country during the last three years, adversely affecting the farmers leading to suicides in many cases;

(b) if so, the details thereof, year-wise; and

(c) the remedial measures being taken in this regard, to save farmers from debt and suicides?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPADYESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) A Statement showing year-wise percentage variations in wholesale Price Index Numbers of major agricultural commodities during the last three years is enclosed. *(See* below).

(c) The various steps taken to protect the interests of farmers include; fixation of minimum support prices of major agricultural commodities and undertaking procurement operations thereof; implementation of market intervention scheme; and using instruments of trade to discourage imports and encourage exports, etc.